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ABSTRACT

Communications policy and planning were investigated through the Republic of Niger's television service, Tele-Sahel, a state-owned autonomous service with a mandate to provide programs for rural development. In order to understand the context within which Tele-Sahel operates, the following topics related to television broadcasting in Niger were examined: (1) economic, political, social, and cultural factors; (2) communications policy and planning; and (3) viewpoints of officials responsible for broadcasting. A content analysis was performed on programs in a random sample of 32 weeks in the period from April 1979 to July 1984. These programs were identified as either imported or locally produced and as nationally or rurally oriented. The programs were then further broken down by language and by content specific to rural development. It was found that, while efforts are being made to orient programing to Nigeriens in terms of locally produced programs, that many of these programs are not in a language understandable to the majority of Nigeriens. It is concluded that, even with Niger's extensive television broadcasting system with receivers placed in even remote villages, the use of locally produced programs to facilitate rural development needs has not been particularly effective. A list of interviewees and the interview questionnaire are appended, and an 89-item bibliography cites a number of reports written in French as well as English sources. (MES)

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TELEVISION BROADCASTING FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGER

by

Mark A. Hukill

Paper Presented to the International Television Studies Conference
London, England July, 1986

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ABSTRACT

Communication policy and planning is examined through the Republic of Niger's unique television service, Tele-Sahel, which has been officially oriented toward providing programs for rural development.

Coupling an analysis of the social system in which Tele-Sahel operates with a content analysis of five years of programs, this paper draws conclusions regarding the effectiveness of locally produced programs to facilitate rural development needs.

Given Niger's extensive television broadcasting system with receivers placed in even remote rural villages, actualizing intentions of facilitating the development needs of the country, and especially the rural development needs, remains a major challenge.

"A broadcast signal which reaches remote rural areas and reception centers in those areas make our television unique among developing countries."

Moctar Diallo --
Director-General ORTN

"There is no other television system in the Third World today which has so effectively jumped all of the hurdles of geography and demography in providing a national service based on local programming."

Annick LeGall --
Technical Assistant
AUDECAM-France

I. INTRODUCTION

Since its inception in 1978, Niger's unique television service, Tele-Sahel, has been officially oriented toward providing programming for rural communities to help meet the goals and objectives of rural development. With nearly 1,500 television sets powered by solar batteries installed in rural villages, television in Niger has the potential to reach a majority of the largely rural population.

Due to the extensive facilities already on hand from 'Television Scolaire,' Niger's fifteen year experiment in television assisted education to primary schools, and what was seen as the importance of the impact that could be made by television as a means of education and information, the government of Niger created Tele-Sahel as the public television broadcast authority and envisioned a program orientation toward educating and sensitizing the populations of Niger. Tele-Sahel

Illustration 1 Typical Rural Community Television Set in Niger During Broadcast Hours

operated for its first year in conjunction with the scholastic television service under the authority of the Ministry of Education. Programming was conceived according to the forms and modalities of the scholastic service. In April 1979, Television Scolaire was ended and ORTN, l'Office de Radiodiffusion Television du Niger (The Office of Radio and Television Broadcasting of Niger) became an 'autonomous' branch of the Ministry of Information. Broadcasting began in earnest with approximately fourteen to fifteen hours of programming scheduled per week in the evenings on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays. With the exceptions of special program weeks where extra hours or evenings of broadcasting are added (usually due to a holiday or government event), and a brief experiment in early 1984 with a seven day per week broadcast schedule, the original four evenings per week of broadcasts still stands today.

Defined as a state owned autonomous service, Tele-Sahel operates from Niamey, the capital city. ORTN, as a branch of the Ministry of Information, has sole authority to broadcast both radio and television signals in Niger. All employees, including artistic directors and producers are State civil servants who are governed by the Fonction Publique, the State Civil Service Ministry. Operationally, ORTN is autonomous in the sense that decision making in programming and production are largely the responsibility of the Office. This autonomy is understandably perfunctory in actuality however, as the Directors of both radio and television as well as the Director-General of ORTN are held directly accountable to the Minister of Information, the Council of Ministers and the Supreme Military Council, which are, in hierarchical order, the governing bodies of Niger's extensive and highly centralized

government bureaucracy. The autonomous role of ORTN is also kept in check by the President of Niger, General Seyni Kountche, a regular viewer of television who often telephones directly to ORTN with comments and criticism.

Under the stipulation to fill more than half of its broadcasting time with locally produced material (in January 1981, locally produced programming was officially set at 80% of total broadcast time), Tele-Sahel was given the grand objectives of creating national unity and a sense of belonging to Niger, providing informational and educational needs to the populations of Niger and stimulating and promoting development in Niger including rural development.

In Niger, the official fundamental role of information has been declared to be education, entertainment, and sensitization of the population to problems of their country and the world. In the long-term, the role the information sector plays in educating the masses is seen as quite large. "It is a matter of bringing the contribution of the media to accelerating the development process and to renew national cultural values notably by the use of national languages" (The five year plan of Niger, 1979). This objective includes providing information and education for attaining the long term development goals set forth by the government of maintaning a sufficient supply of water, attaining self-sufficency in food supplies, and providing for the health needs of the rural populations as basic needs. Other objectives of increasing agricultural productivity, reforestation and decreasing the advance of the desert as well as creating an awareness among rural populations to

their role in development, are all seen as part of the 'raison d'etre' of information and are the objectives incorporated in the programming of Tele-Sahel.

To date, and after more than five years of operation, no research has evaluated the efficacy of Niger's television service to establish national unity, provide entertainment and mass education, or promote rural development. The effects of television on development or even the extent to which the intentions of the television service have been operationalized have not been studied. The latter is a prerequisite to the evaluation of the overall role of television in rural development.

Although not directly concerned with effects, the intent of this research is to get away from linear, one-way models of communication flows through television which have often accompanied dubious top-down development strategies. A more appropriate approach would be to investigate processes and structures at the source of messages of the television service which affect and are affected by wider socio-economic and political contexts. From the results of research in the past two decades, there is a need to consider communication not as a simple independent variable but as both a dependent and independent variable in a complex set of relationships with social, economic, and political structures and processes (Shore 1980).

Objectives

Television programs are not developed, produced or viewed in a vacuum. A content analysis alone as a means of investigating the message source would not necessarily reveal the underlying social system

pressures, from international to local village levels, which affect programming. The first objective of this research is therefore:

1. To situate the process of fulfilling the intent to facilitate rural development goals through television programming within the social system context in which the television system operates.

An evaluation of the current standing of the television service in Niger, as well as its possible future, may provide a clearer perspective for planning, policy formation and implementation in utilizing a television service to help meet goals and objectives of rural development. Therefore, in addition to the above first objective, this research will also:

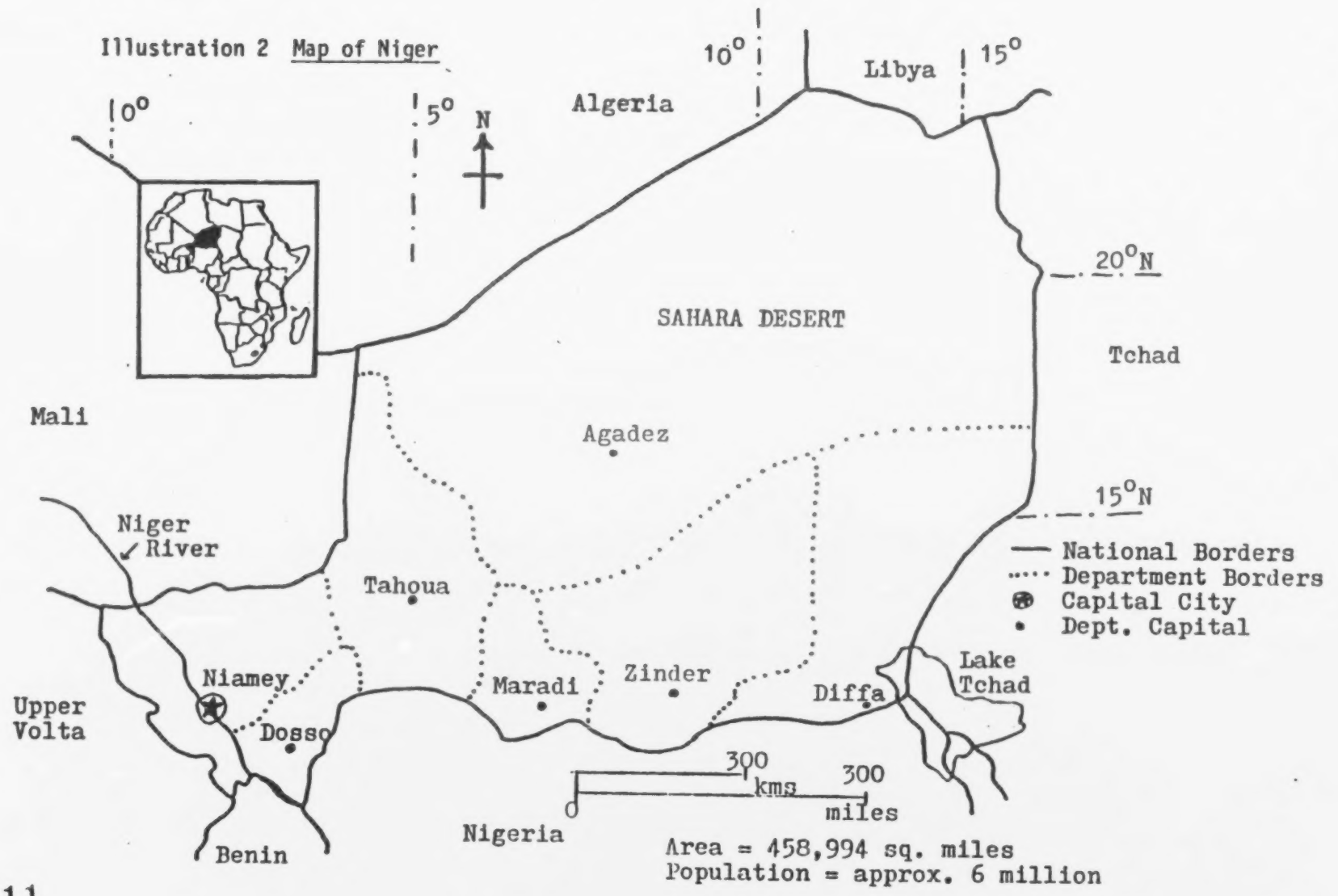
2. Define the intended role of television in Niger in the change process for development, and
3. Describe how current programming reflects intentions of the television service to effect change.

II. TELEVISION BROADCASTING IN THE NIGER CONTEXT

2.1. Economic, Political, Social and Cultural Factors Related to Television Broadcasting in Niger.

Despite uranium revenues initially bringing about an economic 'boom' in development through 1980, a world recession resulting in falling uranium prices and demand have left Niger without substantial income. With an annual budget of only 60 billion francs CFA ($240 million; all dollar figures are stated throughout in $US) in 1979 (Le Sahel, Jan. 12, 1979) and no substantial increases since, resources in this country are quite limited.

Illustration 2 Map of Niger



Uranium is Niger's principal resource and export commodity. Discovered by the French in the 1960's (Afrique Nouvelle, 1967) and exploited in the early 1970's, uranium revenues totalled 7.5 billion CFA ($30 million) in 1976 and rose to 8.2 billion CFA ($33 million) in 1978. In 1979, uranium totalled 74% of Niger's export revenue with beef cattle making up a substantial portion of the rest of export revenues (Oumarou, 1980).

In the late 1970's, international aid began to pour into Niger as prospects for uranium revenues meant good loan conditions from the I.M.F. and from the World Bank. This in turn encouraged many development agencies including US-AID to greatly expand their investments in Niger. From 1975 to 1980 nearly $10 billion in assistance was provided to Niger with France accounting for nearly 20% of the total (Science, May 4, 1984).

Tele-Sahel was created in those expansion years where uranium income allowed Niger a chance to develop sectors of the economy and the country which could not be done before due to lack of resources. With the aid of the French Ministry of Foreign Relations and Cooperation and the F.A.C. (Cooperation Agency Funds) 5 billion CFA ($20 million) was earmarked to build a national television service which would reach even the most remote parts of rural Niger (AIC/1208, French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation). Niger's financial participation was 15% of the total budgeted monies to create the television service and was to be used for operations including personnel, electricity and production materials. This meant that Niger would allocate 1.5% of its national annual budget in each successive year for the operation of the system.

The monetary importance given to the television service alone gave it the responsibility of having to contribute to the goals of national development. Just how much the factor of prestige entered into the decision to go ahead with such a relatively massive project is difficult to assess. Nonetheless, Nigerien officals were convinced that television could and would contribute to development and this became the official motive for its installation (Le Sahel, Feb. 19, 1978).

Projections in the late 1970's called for a uranium production of 18,000 metric tons of unrefined uranite with revenues to reach 15 billion CFA ($60 million) per year by 1990. However, despite a French subsidy, a glut of uranium on the world market and lack of demand caused both production and revenues to fall short of expectations. In 1980, only two years after the beginning of Niger's hopeful expansive moves forward, uranium revenues totalled only 4.3 billion CFA ($17.2 million) and by the end of 1984 are now projected at only 5.4 billion CFA ($21.6 million)[1]. This has created a nearly 30% deficit per year over the 1980 budget in each successive year since (Herbstein, 1982).

The slump in world demand and prices for Niger's uranium is only a part of its economic woes. The problems of population growth outstripping modest increases in food production (a problem throughout Africa) and high energy costs (Niger imports 95% of its enegy needs) have also resulted in the weakening of an already vulnerable economy. Population in the Sahel region of Africa, which includes Niger, is increasing at a rate of 2.7% per year but food production has increased only 1.5% (Science, May 4, 1984).

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1. Exchange rate is based on 250 CFA = $1. In the past two years, the dollar has risen to 450 CFA causing the real value of uranium revenues to drop to a projected $12 million in 1984.

External constraints of drought, low world commodity prices and high energy costs are major current obstacles to development in Niger. Exacerbating these problems is a continued reliance on food aid and financial support creating a long-term dependence on such assistance. Slow growth over the past four years has prompted donor organizations to undertake intensive re-evaluations of development in Niger as well as throughout Africa. Although overall funding levels of $1.7 billion in 1983 represents a general upward trend in aid assistance, 35% of that total has had to go directly to debt services and food imports (Science, May 4, 1984).

The hope of uranium revenues to support television and many other development programs in Niger began to melt away in the early 1980's and drought conditions in 1984 have forced Niger to again become nearly totally dependant on foreign aid to bolster the economy. France gave to Niger in direct deposit to the national treasury, 20 billion CFA ($80 million) in May 1984, which among other things helped pay the salaries of Niger's civil servants. Given these economic conditions, the operation of the television service has become a costly item forcing the government to reduce the annual operating budget by nearly 30% in the past two years (Diallo, 1984).

Niger's economy is similar to many other African nations where economic foundations rest on the extraction of a surplus in the primary sector which tends to profit consumption by administrations and the urban classes (Grellet, 1982). This is evident in Niger with an expanding civil service class whose salaries comprise one-third of the national budget. The absence of investment in the producing sectors of the

economy is often cited as a reason for the development blockage in Black Africa (Grellet, 1982). As in many countries, enrichment from the export of raw materials and commodities (uranium in the case of Niger) has gone principally to the consumption of imported goods and the build-up of administrations and national armies.

Despite urbanization and the uranium industry, rural activites, primarily subsistence farming and animal husbandry activities, constitute the principal resources of 90% of Nigeriens (Aboubakar, 1980). However, these activities are exercised in less than favorable conditions. Niger is twice the size of France yet only in the southern one-third of the country can cultivation take place with the benefit of rain. Potential arable lands represent but 12% of the total area of the country and only 2.5% of the total land area of Niger is actually under cultivation (Atlas du Niger, 1980). In a good year of rainfall the harvest yield of this small area under cultivation is barely adequate to provide the food supply necessary to feed 6 million people. Most Nigeriens therefore, live very austere lifestyles in a rural setting which permits little if any flexibility or possibilities for improvement in the conditions of life.

In such a situation, defining the role of television in the change process for development becomes complex. On an official level, priority has been given to developing the agricultural sector (Five-year plan of Niger), yet urbanization and rural exodus continue. Television has been given the role of disseminating information relevant to such development issues as agricultural improvement, health and sanitation needs and slowing the rural exodus. Television may also be a part of the problem

in that rural audiences also see 'better' conditions in the cities than in the rural areas. Television's role in development in Niger may be a double-edged sword in terms of the consequences of trying to contribute to solve development problems as well as perhaps exacerbating them. Questions of the presence of television itself in the rural setting as a technology foreign to that setting may be contibuting in both positive and negative ways just as so many technologicaly based development projects themselves.

Despite development aid, that vast majority of Nigeriens are not affected by development schemes and perhaps are relatively worse off because of them. Such a dismal appraisal of development in Niger was given by the Vice-President of the World Bank, Earnest Stern, who said:

> "We, I think it is fair to say, among all our achievements, have failed in Africa along with everybody else. We have not fully understood the problems. We have not identified priortites. We have not always designed our projects to fit the agro-climatic conditions of Africa and the social and political frameworks of African countries. This is evidenced by the percentage of poorly performing projects in the agriculture portfolio and by the fact that we and everybody else are still unclear about what can be done in agriculture in Africa." (Science, May 4 1984)

Television's role in development must also be considered from the point of view of detracting from development goals as well as possibly aiding them. In Niger's economy, the introduction of television technology into the rural communities may have a non-negligible effect of exacerbating the very problems it is trying to help resolve.

Amidst Niger's bleak economic picture and the development situation in general, the television service must also operate within the social, political and cultural milieu and constraints of the country.

Relations between Niger's ethnic groups are marked with a sense of diplomatic reciprocity and the respect of the African cousinage. Although conflicts in the past resulted in much bloodshed and aggression between ethnic groups, Niger today is marked by passsive respect for its diverse peoples. The task of uniting the populations of Niger into one and identifying with the nation as a Nigerien rather than say a Hausa or a Zarma, has been the goal of Nigerien leaders (Kountche, 1974). President Kountche's administrative government is a carefully composed selection of people from all of the ethnic groups. Although the ultimate ruling body, the Supreme Military Council, is composed entirely of military members, the government of General Kountche is (since May, 1984) entirely civilian. Nine of the 21 Ministers however are Zarma, the same ethnicity as the President (Bulletin CND, August, 1984).

Perhaps the single most unifying social force in the country is the common religion, Islam (Klotchkoff, 1980). Nigeriens are Sunni Moslem, a moderately conservative form of Islam with tolerance, respect for others and the law of Allah forming key principals of the practice of religion. In Niger, religious fanaticism however, is politically unacceptable. Everyone acts according to his or her own conscience within the norms of the society. At the same table may be some who drink beer and liquor while others abstain, literally respecting the dictates of the Koran. The practice of five prayer sessions each day is manifest in the cities and rural areas. Taxis in the cities will often stop at prayer time and whole villages will come to a halt at the appointed hour. However, many others will continue on their way passing by prayer groups without a glance.

Early explorers to Niger found a tolerance among Nigeriens unequalled in people in other parts of the world (Noblet, 1978). That legendary tolerance marked by a reserved character rests intact today and is part of the reason Niger remains a peaceful nation despite being surrounded by turmoil on nearly all of its borders.

The implication for the television service then, is clear. Despite no written policy to the effect, television reflects the social and ethnic structure of Niger and broadcasts are made in all the major languages of the country with locally produced programming covering all areas and ethnic groups. The Hausa in Zinder can see Zarma theatrical troops and Peuhls in the west can see perhaps a Toubou village water resource project in the east. One role television plays in the change process for development has been and is acting as a conduit for exchange among different groups and has helped to develop attitutes of the sense of being a part of one nation.

Due largely to the effort to broadcast locally produced programs as opposed to importing programming, any evening's broadcast might contain one or more of the many diverse ceremonies, both traditional and modern of the various ethnic groups, Islamic festivals, modern and traditional sports along with a host of other events ranging from installations of village chiefs to dances and local life in general portrayed in theatrical presentations, as well as local entertainment from modern pop-rock groups to traditional choruses of young girls.

Several other social and cultural factors are important to television broadcasting in Niger. Firstly, formal education is modest at best. Only 23% of all school-age children complete primary school, with

education beyond that point being highly selective (Africa contemporary record, 1983). Only a small minority (3%) of all primary school children will finish the next two levels of education leading up to the equivalent of the French baccalaureat (Eliou, 1970). The television service broadcasts, however, in French as well as in local languages, a consequence of which is that only urban and educated people are able to understand the French portion of programming while the rural audiences, who are largely illiterate, are left to look at the images only.

Secondly, the Nigerien character is one of reserve and dignity but is also fatalistic due to the teachings of Islam and the severe climatic conditions of the region over which they have little control. Patience, modesty, mutual respect and family solidarity are practiced values although there is a distaste for manual labor especially among the educated elite and criticism by other Nigeriens and outsiders is poorly received.

These factors have important implications for the television service as well as all the government administrative offices and services in just how things get done. The work ethic in Niger is quite different from the Anglo-Saxon ethic where hard work will, it is assumed, reap good results as well as being valued in morals and character. In Niger, work is done as a task or chore which is accomplished to get on with other aspects of life and is not the centerpiece about which life revolves. The effort to produce a program for television for example or the results of that production are not necessarily valued. Rather, having accomplished the task of producing the program is viewed as adequate in fulfilling work requirements.

Likewise, viewing of a television program is not done necessarily with the critical appraisal common in Western societies as to whether the program is good or not, but rather the effort to broadcast a program is viewed as good and judgment of a program may not be based on content at all. Again, characteristics of tolerance and reserve and the dim view of criticism in general are also manifest in television viewing.

These attitudes may have their roots in Niger's traditional subsistence economy and lifestyle which is little concerned with making an effort to produce the highest yielding crops. As a work value, concern is for planting just enough to meet the immediate needs of the family and community with the accomplishment of the tasks of planting and hoeing to meet those immediate needs (Baier, 1980). After that, it is largely up to fate to decide the yield results.

Understanding these attitudes and values therefore, is crucial to understanding the context in which the television service operates and the intended roles that television takes on in the development process.

2.2 Communication Policy and Planning in Niger.

Up until the late 1970's, little effort was expended in developing any sort of serious national planning scheme in any sector of the Nigerien economy or in socio-political realms. In communications, one major reason for this lack of planning may be traceable to the overall

lack of communications policies. Policies which did exist, were vague at best and gave little or no direction for planning. Even after the coup d'etat in 1974 and the subsequent reorganization of various Ministries, the State Secretariat for Information (later to become the Ministry of Information) had no clear-cut policy guidelines for any of the mass media: the press, radio and television. An unwritten policy of self-censorship for the press and unrelenting, if vague, themes of national unity and development were the key 'policies' of the media.

Not until March 1977, did any concrete policies begin to emerge in terms of communications development in Niger. In 1977, the Ministry of Information conducted a seminar on the theme of "Information and Development" with the overall goal of establishing communications policies, relative primarily to the mass media, and to make recommendations for Niger's first national five-year plan.

The seminar grouped together many Nigerien authorities in various sectors with concerns in communications, and was the first attempt by an entirely Nigerien group to come to grips with the nation's communication policy difficulties. The various commissions of the seminar were quite ambitious and several papers were produced which soon became quasi-official policies. These papers included: 1) guidelines on the roles of information in the national development process, 2) directions for problem-solving for the emancipation of the means of mass communication and, 3) the establishment of roles for communicators and the establishment of public options and power. This first attempt at policy formation and integration into a national plan occurred given various political, economic and social factors similar to other African nations as well as factors unique to Niger.

Bokonga (1980) states that the communication policy in Zaire is founded on an assertion of a national awareness which, it is presumed, leads to the discovery of a national identity, whose cultural values are the foundation of indigenous development whether national or regional. This is not only true for Zaire, but also for many former colonies of Africa which must pick-up from where the colonialists left off in recognizing political borders and trying to contort and develop nations along lines which never before existed in Africa. A difficult task at best, governments, after independence, set about trying to shape people's minds to give them a sense of national awareness instead of the feeling of belonging to a tribe (Bokonga, 1980). A very clear aim, similar to many African nations, resulting from Niger's first attempt at communications policy formation, is to mobilize the country's energies to strengthen a sense of national unity. Alou (1977) sums up the national unity objective of communications by stating, "In our country, which has come out of a long colonial period, national sentiment must be consolidated. The means of communication can contribute to fortify this national sentiment and reinforce the willingness to live together."

Within the political context, such a goal for communications has overriding priority. Within a military dictatorship such as Niger's, the legitimizing force of the mass media, through its active role in forming a national identity, is of utmost importance. The role of consolidating national sentiment that is seen for communications and the development of communications, must be placed however, within the previously discussed socio-cultural context and the diverse ethnic groups and cross-ethnic economies of Niger.

In terms of the traditional societies in Niger, economics may be best analyzed at the village market level. In a predominantly subsistence economy, the village market plays a key role in the daily lives of the vast majority of Nigeriens (Baier, 1980). Village markets are still power centers for 'mass' communication (Alou, 1977). Ugbaojah (1980) asks how radio and television fit into such a communication system based on traditional economic and cultural factors, when in general, the interpersonal networks of the markets are neglected by radio and television.

An answer may lie in the inevitable bond of communication and culture in Africa known as the oral tradition. The 'griots' (musicians and storytellers) of Africa were and still are the indigenous communicators, informing and educating the public using the "mouth-to-ear" mode of transmission. In the traditional societies of Niger, the oral tradition still has attached to it a high social value and is respected and trusted (Entente africaine, March 1980). This form of 'mass' interpersonal communication can be characterized by a very high level of empathy that the audience shares with the storyteller or informer which has the effect of highly personalizing messages. Dan Moussa (1978) contends that the integration of the oral tradition style and form (if not structure) must be made in order for modern communication modes such as television to be effective in Niger.

A series of laws and presidential decrees has set forth, very specifically, the structure of mass media as well as the roles of journalists and the formal tasks of administrators of the media. For example, Law No. 67-011 (Textes legislatifs et reglementaire, 1967),

established on February 11, 1967, is but seven single-sentence Articles which describe the creation of the Office of Radio and Television Broadcasting (ORTN), basically giving it monopolistic broadcasting authority, funded and administratively controlled by the State. Decree No. 78-110 establishes rules of administrative functioning of ORTN, but the rules are limited strictly to the tasks of the Director-General and to describing the structure of a program consulting committee. To date, no general functional policy or set of guidelines has been established for the mass meda. Indeed, the consulting committee on programming, whose effectiveness is highly questionable (Sidikou, 1982), has only recently (late 1982), after four years of existence, established official rubrics for television programming along broad notions of a utilization of the television service for development. Content, however, is still provided in a 'laissez-faire' manner which allows individual producers to pursue their own ideas.

Surprisingly, it was not until late 1982, nearly four years after the television service officially began public broadcasts, that even weekly meetings were held to plan the program schedule for the following week. Planning on a larger scale, to intergrate programming for concerted efforts in rural development with change agents in the field for example, is non-existent. Yet, it is perhaps just this type of planning that may be needed in order to efficiently manage and operate the mass media in Niger in order to attain goals of development with the aid of the media.

It was nonetheless recognized early in the history of the television service, that policies and plans needed to be formed in order that the mass media and interpersonal networks could be utilized effectively for

national unity and development goals. Alou (1977) points to the fact that the State is very rapidly beginning to rely on mass media structures to present messages. However, the media tend to depersonalize information, rendering it almost anonymous and breaking the African 'magic circle' of direct dialogue. In fighting underdevelopment, Alou concludes that the means of informing via mass media modes must be combined with direct interpersonal information transmission modes for effective communication in the development process. This, of course, requires established policies and procedures for planning which, at the present time, are lacking in Niger.

While concrete, official mass media policies are lacking, unwritten and assumed policies abound. There is however, an almost perverse effect of these unstated policies which tend to produce negative consequences on the functioning of the media. One such effect of the lack of functional policies of the press is the evolution of self-censorship. As in many Third World countries, the media have been given the role to construct and not contest. Alou (1977) contends that contrary to always being at odds with those in power, "the press must be at the side of authorities and all who are engaged in national development." It is not difficult to see how the journalist in Niger might interpret such a policy statement into the practice of self-censorship.

* * * * * * * * *

President Kountche of Niger declared on April 15, 1979, in a message to the nation, "If we must mobilize people in order to take control of our destiny, then there are in reality few choices left. Our development

objectives ordain a logic which leads inevitably to an organized development society" (Le Sahel, April 16, 1979).

Perhaps the largest scale effort in development planning in the history of Niger, including communications planning, has come about as a result of Kountche's April, 1979 statement which gave birth to the 'Development Society.' This new institution has also coincided with the implementation of Niger's first five-year plan. With regular broadcasting also beginning in April 1979, television has evolved along with the planning and implementation of the 'Development Society'.

The Development Society has been conceived as a network of 'cells' of autonomous political/economic authority on local, regional and national levels and is said (by the government) to be reflective of the social, economic and political realities of Niger (Rabiou, 1979). The Development Society has been described as a newly developed vehicle for modernization, to maintain the political status quo, and not to disrupt traditional styles and values of peasants, who make up 80% of the population (Sidikou, 1980). It will be the means of participation by the people in the formulation of government policies (Djermakoye, 1980). As yet, full implantation of the structure of the Development Society has not occurred. However, in the planning stages, the first efforts to coordinate mass media, telecommunications infrastructures as well as vast and highly effective interpersonal communications networks in Niger is being attempted.

In many ways, and not accidently, the new structure of the Development Soceity closely parallels the hierarchical structures of both the traditional authority in Niger as well as the organization of the

military government. In terms of the precise hierarchy of authority from top to bottom, it will easily fulfill the goal of "the maintenance of the political status quo." However, its similarity to the traditional authority structure of Niger casts some doubt on the actual fulfillment of the goal of increasing participation through policy formation by the people. If it is to work, claims Sidikou (1980), given the social realities of Niger, then it will be a matter of re-orienting information and the lines of communication. The Development Society, however, may favor top-to-bottom information flows as is evident from its structure. "The effectiveness of the Development Society to be a popular-based vehicle for change will rest with the ability of information to flow 'horizontally' among all members of society" (Sidikou, 1982, p.10)). Sidikou also implies that if participation is to have meaning, then efforts to bolster dialogue among various levels of the structural hierarchy will have to be made in order that planning decisions are made together and the implementation of plans is carried out on equal levels.

The Development Society is probably not the democratizing institution it has been hailed to be in a barrage of participatory rhetoric from the government (Africa contemporary record, 1983). Given the reality of centuries of regional monarchical-style rule, institutions such as the Development Society may only serve to reinforce a dominating authority. This is not to say therefore, that Niger is not on a positive development track. What it does mean perhaps, is that 'participatory development' will be carried out Nigerien-style using the hierarchical power structures. However, as concerns communications development, and the use of communication in rural development, problems arise when the mass media

are not coordinated with the vast new interpersonal communications networks represented by the Development Society.

For example, in the Development Society, the village will be the basic unit or 'cell'. Information in these units, it is thought, should be primarily concerned with issues of daily life and that it should be less of a question of diffusing 'exotic' news and information to the villager (Sidikou, 1982). Instead, media directed at the village level should be concerned with community affairs, projects, meetings, health and welfare problems, agricultural developments, etc. Technically, the mass media in Niger began this task in 1982, taking into consideration such factors as village information needs in communications training programs (CFTI, 1982).

Nevertheless, the establishment of a complete horizontal communication system assumes the coordinated efforts of both the media and services which engage in development activities through interpersonal networks and dialogue with the people (Sidikou, 1982). At present, it appears participation at the local level is being allowed at the expense of participation on the regional and national levels. Feedback, even when sincerely listened to, will probably not suffice for successful fulfillment of participation in the Development Society. Feedback still assumes a hierarchical relationship in this situation and will still result in top-to-bottom information flows. Whether or not a successfully coordinated effort in mass media dissemination and interpersonal dialogue for participatory development will become a policy reality, planned for and implemented, remains perhaps one of the greatest challenges now facing Niger in developing its means of communication, particularly television, in facilitating rural development.

2.3 Perspectives on Television and Rural Development in Niger from the Point of View of those Responsible for Broadcasting.

In an interview on July 30, 1984, conducted by this researcher, the Director-General of ORTN, Moctar Diallo, described the primary goal of the television service as sensitizing all Nigeriens in the social, economic, political and cultural affairs of the country. He emphasized that while television is an official mouth-piece of the government, it also has the responsibility to facilitate the development of the country, a responsibility "of which often too much is expected of us and we simply cannot furnish to everyone's satisfaction.

Niger developed its extensive television service for a number of reasons, many of which rest on the issue of the prestige of having such a system along with the fact that the facilities from the scholastic television service made such a system possible.

In order to accomplish the goal set by the government of national unity, television was expected to play a major role. The national unity role for television was heavily emphasized by most of the officials interviewed by this reseacher in July and August, 1984 (see Appendix 1 and 2 for a list of interviewees and the questionnaire). Diallo summed up the question on what types of programming the television service should offer by stating, "Programs must firstly provide information at the national level and all programming should serve to help Nigeriens know their country better."

Along the lines of the goal of national unity, the Director of Programming at Tele-Sahel, Mamane Adamou added, "In Africa, we were left with the borders of the colonialists which do not have very much to do with our own ethnic realities. Therefore television has permitted a way to create national unity...and better than radio because television shows images as well as just sound. During the television broadcast hours, nobody listens to the radio."

Given the overriding attention to the national unity role of the television service in Niger, it is not surprising to see programming oriented in that direction in terms of locally produced versus imported programming.

In terms of fulfilling the national unity role of television in Niger, officials have recognized that a maximum number of locally produced programs has to be broadcast. Despite the fact that most programming is in French (as is revealed in the content analysis), Annick LeGall (Technical Assistant, AUDECAM) sees, "the effects of the utilization of local languages, especially in the information magazines which are broadcast in all the major languages of the country, and which are for all practical purposes oriented solely to fulfilling national unity goals, seems to be very positive." Diallo, reflecting an earlier statement of the Minister of Information, stated, "As far as television broadcasting is concerned, we neither ignore nor forget anyone. There is something for everyone and everyone sees it." This born out by the fact that Tele-Sahel even broadcasts an information magazine in such languages as Gourmantche and Arabic. Only a very small portion of the country's population are speakers of those languages.

The focus of the interviews with the Nigerien officials was on the intent to facilitate rural development via television in Niger. Given the placement of community television sets in rural villages, the potential to fulfill the role of facilitating rural development is high. However, in terms of television facilitating rural development, most of the officals interviewed said that much more could be done.

As the content analysis reveals, there is in actuality only a very small portion of programming (mean of approximately one program every two weeks) devoted to programs with rural development content intentions which are also in a language understandable to the majority of Nigeriens. Adamou stated, "This is an area in which we could do much more but are under considerable constaints to actually produce." The officials interviewed at the Ministry of Rural Development and the Ministry of Health concurred that they would like to see more programming on television that dealt with the areas of rural development in which they are involved.

Almost unanimous concensus was expressed by those interviewed that televison can be a change agent for rural development and that the potential of producing programming in conjunction with what the various Ministry's field agents are trying to accomplish, is a very attractive means to facilitate rural development. One dissenting opinion was expressed which concluded that given the social reality of television being seen first as entertainment, television could not really effectively play such a serious role. However, given the lack of any formal surveys for understanding the Nigerien audience and research into the effects of television on that audience, such a conclusion may be

unnecessarily pessimistic in the opinion of this researcher. In order to make more programming in the rural development area a reality, Adamou stated, "The political will of more inter-ministerial and inter-service cooperation will have to take effect."

At this point in time, rural development agents do not use television as a resource in their work. However when asked, Nigerien officals saw this potential for the television service. The idea that a television program could reinforce the action of the change agent in the field and the possibility of rural populations giving feedback through the agents to more fully incorporate participatory development objectives into the television service program is seen as very real to many of the officials interviewed. However, this concept for television remains only in the idea stage in Niger. The Director of Water and Forest Resources, Maikano Goumoundakoye, re-iterated that in order for such an ideal state to actually take place, "a concerted effort to coordinate actions of rural development projects with the production of television progams will be necessary."

The problem of sufficiently qualified production personnel with an interest in programming to facilitate rural development is the major reason cited by officials of Tele-Sahel that more is not done at least on the production side. On this subject Diallo said, "One problem we have seen in training personnel competent to run the television service has been that many, especially those trained outside the country, lose touch with the rural realities of our country." The Director of Studies, Andre Delanne, of the Nigerien school which trains personnel in journalism and media production (CFTI), stated that the school is looking more and more

to train production personnel who will have an interest in and be able to produce programming which can be of benefit to the rural populations of Niger. This however is seen by Delanne as a very long-term proposition "... as it requires more than just technical training. It also requires a general education not now provided for in Nigerien schools which is more oriented to the realities of life in Niger."

Requests from the various Ministries for programming in the area of rural development are very infrequent according to Adamou. Only on several occassions have requests come from the Ministry of Health, for example, and on those occasions the Women's magazine program has done specific content according to those requests. Both the producer and the official at the Ministry of Health that was interviewed by this researcher saw those programs as particularly effective in getting out information on nutrition. A particular program requested by the agricultural service of the Ministry of Rural Development was produced in 1982 which showed farmers the care and grafting techniques of young fruit trees. This program received a tremendous response back to the agricultural service in terms of field agents requesting that it be shown again and in terms of requests to provide more fruit trees according to the Director of the Agricultural Service in the Konni region. That particular program was produced, however, with the help of a non-governmental aid organization, Lutheran World Relief, which provided transportation and support materials for the Nigerien film crew. The Producer/Director of that program was this researcher.

These examples of programming aimed at rural development are the exception to programming of the television service. They point to the

fact that a tremendous effort to coordinate services and resources outside of the television service was required in order that they be produced. The complex coordination of such programming is an effort that many Nigerien producers are not willing to undertake according to the Director of Production at Tele-Sahel.

The ability of Tele-Sahel to fully actualize its role to facilitate rural development is therefore left in doubt. One explanation as a reason why more is not done and perhaps why more may not be done in the near future in terms of producing programming to facilitate rural development has been advanced by LeGall who emphasizes the problems which stemmed from the transistion between the scholastic television service and the national television service causing a rift in personnel allocation. According to LeGall, despite the capacity for scholastic television to continue with the development of the national system, the Kountche government wanted to do away with any vestiges of the previous Diori government and decided simply to end the scholastic service. This meant that personnel of the Ministry of Education who were qualified in producing educational programming and who would be the ones logically to continue into domains such as rural development programming were re-assigned out of the television service. This has meant that the Ministry of Information has had to rely on a small cadre of insufficiently trained personnel to produce all of the local programming for Tele-Sahel. Training of additional personnel has been a long-term effort and to date only a barely adequate number of competent personnel now work at Tele-Sahel. "This number," according to the Director-General," is hardly sufficient to do more in the area of rural development programming."

In the long-run however, more programming will probably depend on effective inter-ministerial and inter-service cooperation with the television service to make the complex production of rural development programmming possible.

2.4. Summary

Television in Niger can be situated within a complex array of interconnecting influences and factors of the social system of which it is a part. Fulfilling intent to facilitate rural development goals through television programming can be seen in the light of social, economic, political and cultural perspectives.

The historical and traditional milieu in which television has been introduced in Niger is not negligible on the overall character of the television service. Centuries of the comings and goings of vast empires, conquests, Islamization and the establishment of sophisticated and widespread societies brings a richness of tradition unique to a television system in this part of the world. Events leading up to Niger's independence and the colonialization period in general have left an indelible mark on the traditional and historical environments and changed the social system into which these events have intruded. The mix of a traditional society utilizing modern technologies for their own development needs and the intermingling of modern society and values with a largely subsistence rural milieu has had surprising and not infrequently negative consequences. Television then, as both a shaping

force and a reflection of that new social milieu, takes upon itself a multitude of responsibilities. It must be sensitive to a diverse ethnic population with different cultures, languages and traditions, the problem and consequences of severe climatic conditions of the Sahel and be at once responsible to and the spokesman for the government of Niger as well as be a credible source of information, education and entertainment to the varied audience it serves.

Given that policies and planning for the utilization of the television service have been vague in the past, the roles that television takes are not all necessarily official roles that the government has ordained but roles which have been acquired from historical, social, economic and cultural values, behaviors and attitudes of the social system which it serves.

Clearly, the theme of facilitating and solidifying a sense of national unity is one role which the television service takes upon itself given the diverse social base within which it operates. National unity is also a role which has been mandated by the government who are at once supported by the legitimizing force of such a communication system which they control as well as being concerned that this legitimization is dependent on continuity and harmonious unity within borders which traditionally have not seen such harmony and peaceful co-existence.

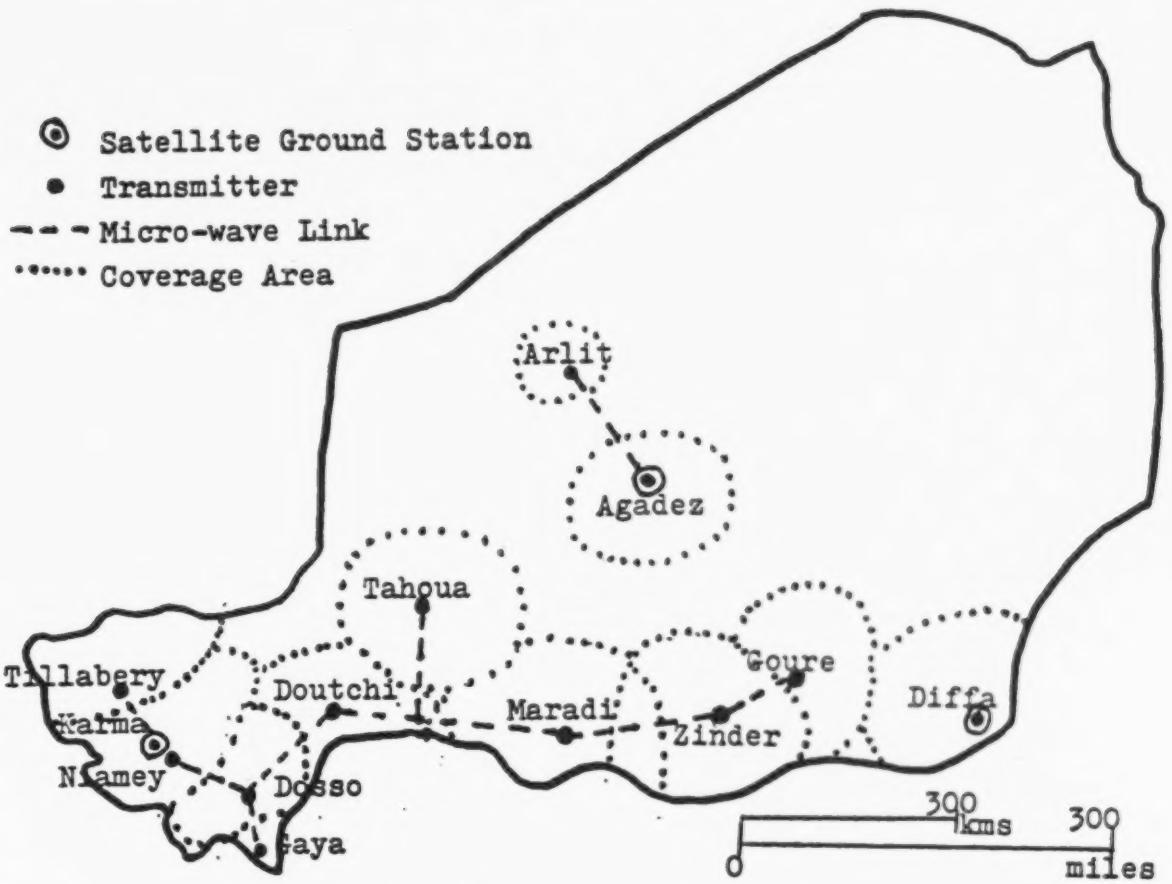
Within the unity role, television in Niger also acts as a conduit for exchange among culture groups facilitating perhaps a consciousness raising in terms of understanding different values and behaviors both traditional and modern as well as both imposed and inherited.

Television is also a conduit for government information to the people. Whether or not communication via television can also have a two-way flow in order that participatory development elements can have an effect is largely to be seen in Niger. Even in Niger's new Development Society, the information flow is principally one-way.

Among the other roles of television in the change process for development are the provision of education and information relevant to the development goals and objectives of not only the government but also the villagers on a local level. Since development is characterized by a multitude of national, regional, and local urban and rural sectors, highly visible and rapidly expanding sectors tend to be highlighted by television in a complex 'game' of satisfying government doctrine, needing to fill broadcast hours and the dilemma of doing so based on Western notions of accomplishment versus traditional work ethics and values as well as genuinely trying to satisfy needs to facilitate change.

Although rural development issues may encompass the most pronounced problems in Niger and certainly the problems which affect the vast majority of Nigeriens, television's role in facilitating change in the rural development sector may not be representative of that sectors importance in terms of human need.

Illustration 3. The Niger Television Broadcasting Network



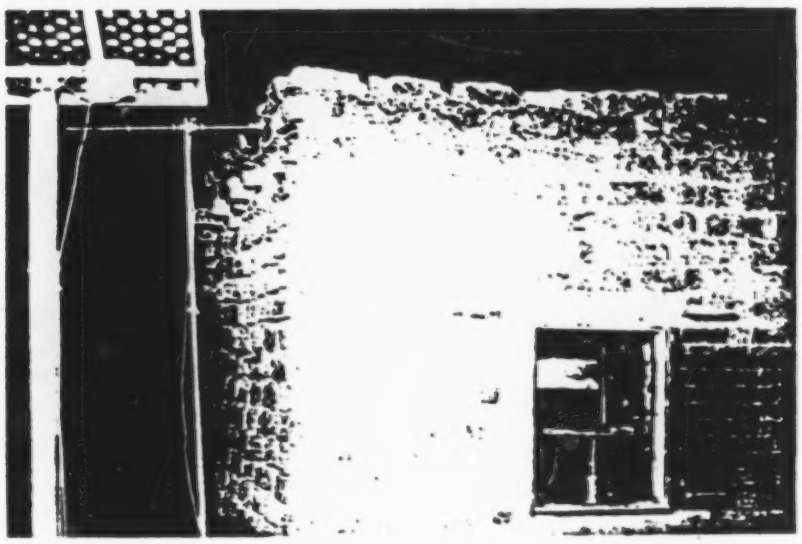
Transmission Centers	Channel	Broadcast Frequency (MHz) Image	Sound	Power (kW) Image	Sound	In service since
Niamey	9	215.239	221.739	10	2.5	1973
Dosso	4	175.250	181.750	10	2.5	1977
Konni	9	215.250	221.750	10+0.1	1.0	(1980)
Maradi	7	199.261	205.761	10+0.1	1.0	(1980)
Zinder	5	183.250	189.750	10+0.1	1.0	(1980)
Diffa	7	n.a.	n.a	n.a	n.a.	(1981)
Agadez	9	n.a	n.a	n.a.	n.a.	(1982)

Retransmitters located in Tillabery (since 1978), Tahoua (since 1981) Gaya, Goure and Arlit (since 1982); all 1kW of power.

International satellite ground station located in Niamey (Karma) since 1982. Domestic satellite ground stations located in Niamey (Goudel) Agadez and Arlit. Note. From Document No.7201/A TDF Sept. 1978

Illustration 4

Configuration and Costs of Niger's Rural Community Solar Powered Television Receivers.



Description	Receiving Equipment		Solar Generator
Antenna, mast and cables	$ 480	(28%)	
1 TV Receiver (T-747)	700	(40%)	
TV set stand	180	(10%)	
33 watt solar panel			$ 480 (29%)
Panel supports, cables			280 (17%)
140 A.h. Accumulator battery with housing and accessories			370 (22%)
Packing and shipment	130	(8%)	200 (12%)
Installation and Start-up	240	(14%)	350 (20%)
Totals:	$1730	(100%)	$1680 (100%)

GRAND TOTAL = $3,410 per set installed.

Note. From Document No. 7280 TDF, Oct., 1981; Photo by researcher.

III. PROGRAM CONTENT ANALYSIS

The production facilities of Tele-Sahel make possible a wide variety of programming options. Film is used for news and events coverage in the interior of the country as well as for Presidential trips outside of the country. Film is also used for documentaries and production of short to full length fiction features. The mini-cams are used primarily for news reporting in and around Niamey as well as for information magazines produced on location. The mobile production unit allows for large scale coverage of events such as sports and festivals while the studio facilities are used mainly for dramatic productions, round tables, the Islamic program as well as a wide variety of small scale entertainment segments.

Although 50% of programming was to be locally produced according to the initial program grid established by the program consulting committee (CCP), in January 1981 when the new transmission network and color production facilities were nearing completion a new policy regarding local production was established. The new policy increased the amount of broadcast time of locally produced programs to 80% of total broadcast time per week.

> "The option of the government of Niger is to broadcast programs adapted to the Nigerien audience. To these ends, television will call on foreign produced programs for only a small portion of its needs and will increase locally produced programming to 80% of total broadcast time" (Report of the CCP adopted by the Counsel of Ministers in Act 0021/1981).

With this policy, Tele-Sahel initiated broadcast rubrics of programming, some of which had come into being before January, 1981

including the news in French, information magazines in major local languages officially designated as programming aimed at rural audiences, round tables, theater and drama, a women's magazine, a young peoples's magazine and programs called 'Action and Development' and 'Nigerien Realites and Perspectives.'

The CCP initially agreed that these programs should be "produced in collaboration with delegated producers from each of the various ministries (rural development, civil services, finances, health, etc.) to sensitize and inform Nigeriens on matters of national, urban and rural interest" (CCP Report January, 1981, p.2). This latter decision was never implemented and Tele-Sahel producers delved into subject matters in the domain of each of the ministries on only infrequent occasions.

The results of a breakdown of Tele-Sahel programming from a random sample of 32 weeks over the period from April, 1979 to July, 1984 is presented on the following pages. Tables 1 and 2 present a summary of that breakdown. Included are programs which began in 1979 as well as programs begun at a later date. The breakdown consists of mean minutes per week broadcast in each of the catagories of programming. Also, the mean number of minutes per week of program types is given for the period before and after the January 1981 decision to produce 80% of total broadcast time locally.

Commercials and publicity are allowed on television in Niger except for advertisements for alcohol and cigarettes. However, the very small number of commercials broadcast overall does not warrent their inclusion in the program breakdown. Only six 30 second advertisements appeared in the entire 32 week sample.

Mean Broadcast Minutes per Week of Tele-Sahel Programs

I. Imported Programs

Sports -- mean = 63 mins/wk (90% soccer)
mean = 1.5 programs/wk

Does not include the week of the world cup tournament in 1982 in which 660 minutes of soccer was imported in one week.)

Variety -- mean = 24 mins/wk
mean = 1.5 progs/wk

15 mins/wk European/American, 9 mins/wk African (non-Nigerien)

Documentary mean = 42 mins/wk
mean = 1.8 progs/wk

Entertainment Films -- mean = 137 mins/wk
mean = 2 films/wk

All films are in French or with French subtitles.
Approximately 25% are African made.

Children's Program -- mean = 14 mins/wk

TOTAL IMPORTED PROGRAMS -- 280 mins/wk

Before Jan. '81 -- 263mins/wk
After Jan. '81 -- 289mins/wk

II. Locally Produced Programs -- Intended for the national audience.

News (in French) -- mean = 111 mins/wk
mean = 4 progs/wk
Normally scheduled for 30 minutes each broadcast evening.

Local Entertainment -- mean = 110 mins/wk
mean = 6.5 progs/wk, 17mins/prog.

Includes sports, music, variety, and danse.

Islamic programs -- mean = 17 mins/wk
mean = 1 prog/wk

Normally scheduled for 15 mins. once per week, average reflects special programs throughout the year on various religious holidays.

National Interest/Government Information -- mean = 52 mins/wk

Programs are principally of a political nature reflecting the functioning and actions of the government 15 of 32 weeks in the random sample had no programming in this catagory.

Young People's Magazine/Urban Oriented) -- mean = 50 mins/wk

The magazine is usually scheduled for a 30 minute program once per week. Average minutes per week reflect additional programming with similar urban oriented content as the magazine format.

Children's Programs -- mean = 11 mins/wk

2/3 of weeks in sample contained no programming in this category. Often locally produced children's programs are run in a series four programs per week.)

TOTAL LOCALLY PRODUCED -- INTENDED FOR NATIONAL AUDIENCE:
mean = 351 mins/wk

Before Jan. '81 -- 338 mins/wk
After Jan. '81 -- 363 mins/wk

III. Locally Produced -- Aimed Officially at Rural Audiences

Information Magazines: mean total = 112 mins/wk

Language	Mean mins/wk	Mean progs./wk	
Hausa	47	2	
Zarma	43	2	
Fulfulde	7	1	(began in Sept. '81)
Kanouri	7	1	(began in Sept. '81)
Tamajaq	5	1	(began in Jan. '82)
Gourmantche	1	1	(began in Sept. '83)
Toubou	1	1	(began in Sept. '83)
Arabic	1	1	(began in Sept. '83)

Although officially aimed at rural audiences, not all of the information magazine's content could be described as intended to facilitate rural development. Rural development content programming is broken down in Table 4. In the majority of cases information magazines are a rough translation of the news in French and often include regional news.

Nigerien Realities and Perspectives -- mean = 21 mins/wk
mean = 2 progs/wk

Program was discontinued in 1983 in favor of additional Information magazines.

Action and Development -- mean = 19 mins/wk

Began in Jan. '81 and was discontinued after Oct. '83.)

A Look At The Samaryas (A program on the local community action groups)
mean = 11 mins/wk

Discontinued after Jan. '82.

Women's Magazine -- mean = 20 mins/wk
mean = 1 prog/wk

The most consistent program in the Tele-Sahel schedule broadcast each Sunday night without exception in the 32 week random sample.

Again, although officially aimed at rural audiences, specific program content is not necessarily designed to facilitate rural development. Often the latter four program types are also broadcast in French which excludes the majority of Nigeriens from comprehending at least the audio portion of the program. When the picture is just a person talking, this is a serious problem.

Literacy Programs: mean = 6 mins/wk

Programs began January 1982 with the decision to increase local production to 80% but were discontinued after June 1982 when Ministry of Education personnel was reassigned.

Hausa -- mean = 2.8 mins/wk
Zarma -- mean = 2.2 mins/wk
Fulfulde -- mean = 2.3 mins/wk
Tamajaq -- mean = 2.3 mins/wk

Theater and Drama -- mean = 63 mins/wk
mean = 1 prog/wk

Round Tables (in local languages) mean = 8 mins/wk

Round Tables in French are included in programming for the national audience under either 'urban oriented' or Government Information depending on specific content of the program.

TOTAL LOCALLY PRODUCED AIMED OFFICIALLY AT RURAL AUDIENCES:
mean = 260 mins/wk

Before Jan. '81 -- 257 mins/wk
After Jan. '81 -- 263 mins/wk

MEAN GRAND TOTAL LOCALLY PRODUCED (II. and III. combined):
mean = 611mins/wk
mean = 26 progs/wk

Before Jan. '81 -- mean = 595 mins/wk; mean = 23 progs/wk
After Jan. '81 -- mean = 626 mins/wk; mean = 27 progs/wk

TOTAL PROGRAMMING: mean = 891 min/wk = 14 hours 50 mins/wk
mean = 33 progs/wk

Before Jan.'81 -- mean = 858 mins/wk; mean = 29 progs/wk
After Jan.'81 -- mean = 915 mins/wk; mean = 36 progs/wk

The results of the program breakdowns were analyzed by looking at trends in total hours of broadcasting per week in each of the categories of language and program content intended for rural audiences compared with imported and locally produced programs oriented toward more urban audiences or the entire national audience. A chi-square analysis for "goodness of fit" was applied to the data with regards to the actual broadcast time of locally produced programming against the official policy of filling 80% of total broadcast time with locally produced preograms. The formula $\chi^2 = [(O-T)^2/T]$ is utilized where "O" = the observed frequencies of actual total time in minutes of local program broadcasts and "T" = the officially mandated frequencies of 80% of total broadcast time. Similarly, numbers of programs are applied to the formula to test the efficacy of producing at least 80% of programming locally.

Significant changes in trends over the five year period were also analyzed with regards to local versus imported programming as well as

Table 1

Summary of Tele-Sahel 5-Year Program Breakdown

Program Type	Mean Mins/wk	% of Total per Type	Mean # of Programs/wk
I. Imported:			
Sports	63	22.5	1.5
Variety	24	8.5	1.5
Documentary	42	15	2
Film	137	49	1
Children's Program	14	5	1
TOTAL	280	100%	7
II. Locally Produced - National Audience Oriented:			
News (in French)	111	32	4
Local Entertainment	110	31	7
Islamic Program	17	5	1
National Interest/ Government Information	52	15	0.5
Young People's Magazine/ Urban Oriented	50	14	2
Children's Program	11	3	0.5
TOTAL:	351	100%	15
III. Locally Produced -- Intended Officially for Rural Audiences			
Information Magazines:			
Hausa	47	18.0	2
Zarma	43	17.0	2
Fulfulde	7	1.0	
Kanouri	7	1.0	
Tamajaq	5	0.5	
Gourmantche	1	0.5	
Toubou	1	0.5	
Arabic	1	0.5	
Nigerien Realities and Perspectives	21	8.0	1
Action and Development	19	7.0	1
A Look at the Samaryas	11	11.0	1

Table 1 (con't)

Women's Magazine	20	8.0	1
Literacy Programs:	6	0.5	1
Theater and Drama	63	24.0	1
Round Table	8	3.0	1
TOTAL:	260	100%	11
TOTAL LOCALLY PRODUCED:	611	69	26
TOTAL IMPORTED	280	31	7
TOTAL PROGRAMMING	891	100%	33

Table 2

Tele-Sahel Programming Breakdown Before and After the Date Setting the 80% level of Programs to be Produced Locally

	Before Jan '81			After Jan '81		
	Ave. mins/wk	% of Total	Ave. Progs/wk	Ave. Mins/wk	% of Total	Ave. Progs/wk
Imported	263	31	7	289	31	7
Local Produced/ Nationally Oriented	(338)	(39)	(14)	(363)	(40)	(16)
Local Produced/ Rural Oriented	(257)	(30)	(9)	(263)	(29)	(69)
Total Locally Produced	595	69	23	626	69	27
Total Programming	858	100%	30	915	100%	34

programs broadcast in local languages versus programs broadcast in French. A t-test analysis of differences of mean number of minutes was used to determine trend significance between samples of programming within the first half and the second half of the 1979-1984 analysis period. Dividing the period into two time frames corresponding to the date (January, 1981) of setting the official policy with regards to the percentage of broadcast hours in local languages and locally produced programs, gives two populations from which the sample weeks are drawn. The t-test determines if the difference between the two samples of weeks of programming is significant to analyze if trends in programming follow the official intentions of building toward more and more locally produced programs broadcast in local languages which would correspond to intentions of broadcasting to rural audiences.

The hypothesis that the observed and policy mandated levels of locally produced program times per week would be different was significant (χ^2 = 1173.2, df = 31, p .001) for programming over the five-year period. Similarly, the difference between observed and theoretical levels of programming before January, 1981 and programming after January, 1981 were also significant (χ^2 = 244.8, df = 11, p .001 and χ^2 = 928.3, df = 19, p .001 respectively). This result may be interpreted as a failure on the part of Tele-Sahel to fulfill literal policy requirments as concerns the production of local programming since the actual levels and theoretical (policy) levels in terms of minutes per week of local production are significantly different.

However, the hypothesis that the actual number of locally produced programs broadcast each week would be different from the theoretical

level of 80% of the number programs broadcast being locally produced each week was not significant for programs either before or after the January, 1981 policy date. Although the policy specifically states broadcast time and not numbers of programs, this result may tentatively be interpreted as indicating success on the part of Tele-Sahel to orient programs to Nigeriens.

In order to determine trend significance of mean number of minutes broadcast of imported and locally produced programs before and after the January, 1981 policy date, it was hypothesized that a significant change would occur in the mean number of minutes broadcast in these two categories due to the implementation of the policy. However, as Table 2 shows, the mean number of minutes of locally produced and imported programming before and after January, 1981 are the same. A χ^2 test showed no significant difference between these groups. Nonetheless, the number of actual programs which were locally produced did increase from from a mean of 23 to 27 after January, 1981. A *t*-test showed this increase to be significant (*t* = 3.77, *df* = 30, *p* .01). These programs account for the entire increase in mean total numbers of programs which may be interpreted as a further indication of the intentions on the part of Tele-Sahel to attain levels in programming (at least in terms of numbers of programs) set by the policy which the government has determined as the level of programming needed to successfully orient programming to Nigeriens.

In October, 1983, a generic program grid was established which reflects the addition of new information magazines broadcast in local languages. Although this program grid was designed such that 80% of

broadcasting time would be locally produced, the time slot for imported film programming was designated as only 45 minutes. However, since the mean length of imported films is 75 minutes, the difference between what was scheduled and what was actually broadcast accounts for the actual imported programs to average more than 20% per week. (Source: Mamane Adamou, Director of Programming, Tele-Sahel). This helps explain, at least for programming after October, 1983, why the policy level has not been obtained but clearly shows the intentions of the television service to meet policy at least in terms of numbers of programs being broadcast. It is for this reason that this researcher tentatively interprets the results as indicating success on the part of the television service to orient programming to Nigeriens in terms of locally produced programming. This despite the failure of the television service to obtain the intended literal policy levels for locally produced programs in terms of actual broadcasting time.

While locally produced programming levels might indicate intentions of the television service to orient programs to Nigeriens, in terms of the languages in which the programs are broadcast, this conclusion may not be wholly justified. Table 3 presents a breakdown of average minutes per week and average number of programs per week broadcast in each of the several languages of Niger.

French accounts for 74% of programming (not including variety entertainment programs) and 14 of 33 or 42% of the mean total number of programs broadcast on Tele-Sahel. Considering only 10-15% of the population in Niger is literate in French, much of the programming, at least aurally, is not understable to the vast majority of Nigeriens.

Table 3

Mean Number of Minutes per Week of Programming on Tele-Sahel in Each of the Several Languages of Niger.

	Mean Minutes/Week	Mean Number of Programs/Week
Local Languages:		
Hausa	99	3
Before Jan. '81	101	3
After Jan. '81	97	3
Zarma	72	3
Before Jan. '81	94	3
After Jan. '81	59	3
Others	61	4
Before Jan. '81	0	0
After Jan. 81	61	4
Total Local Languages	205	9
Before Jan. '81	194	6
After Jan. '81	212	10
French	537	14
Before Jan. '81	499	14
After Jan. '81	561	14

Note. Entertaiment programs such as music variety are not included in the above totals.

Significant changes in programming in French and in local languages were calculated by a t-test on the mean number of minutes per week broadcast before and after January, 1981. The assumption was that an effort to increase the orientation of the television service to Nigeriens represented by the January, 1981 policy would mean an increase in progamming in local languages and a decrease in French.

Firstly, the hypothesis that there would be a significant increase in the mean number of minutes per week broadcast in local languages after January, 1981 was tested. A one-tailed t-test revealed no significant difference. Indeed actual average minutes per week broadcast in Hausa and Zarma fell after January, 1981 although there was a compensating increase in the addition of other languages.

Similarly, the hypothsis that average number of minutes per week of programming in French would decrease after January 1981 was not significant.

Although an increase in the mean number of programs broadcast in local languages (from 6 to 10) occured in the period after Janaury 1981 when additional information magazines were added to the program schedule, a t-test showed no significant increase in the mean number of minutes broadcast in local languages per week. This result may be interpreted as a failure on the part of Tele-Sahel to orient programming to Nigeriens in terms of broadcasting in local languages versus French.

The results do reflect however, the broader socio-political reality of television broadcasting in Niger. Given that programs are produced by a group of people who are among the educated elite of Niger and who are civil servants of a government whose official language is French, may

help to explain perhaps why so much programming is in French. This, despite the inability of most Nigeriens to understand French and the seeming commitment to orient programming to the Nigerien population in terms of numbers of programs. An interesting continuation of this research would be to assess the impact of television on the French literacy rate in Niger given the high rate of programming broadcast in French.

In terms of policy, the overriding role of television in Niger is to facilitate national unity. All ethnic groups are represented in programming in Niger in that at least one program per week is now aimed at each ethnic group It may be concluded that considering the orientation of television to Nigeriens in terms of numbers of locally produced programs, the intent to facilitate national unity is an actuality. Whether or not the national unity role of television is being effectively fulfilled remains questionable in the opinion of this researcher. Certainly, the intent to broadcast locally produced programs and producing programs relevant to each of Niger's ethnic groups, presents a strong case in favor of actualizing the intent to facilitate national unity. However, the large portion of programming (74%) which is broadcast in French excludes approximately 85% of Nigeriens. Whether this has an alienating effect or whether Nigeriens can identify with programs in French simply because it is the national language requires further investigation to more fully assess the national unity role of television.

Given Niger's unique television service with sets placed in rural communities, an assesment of programming to facilitate rural development

is especially warranted. Table 4 presents a breakdown of Tele-Sahel programs which are content specific to each of the sectors of rural development in Niger.

A mean of only 2 out of 33 programs are broadcast each week with content specific to rural development and only a mean of one program every two weeks meets the criteria of content specific to rural development and broadcast in a local language. A χ^2 analysis revealed no significant difference in levels of rural development programs before and after January 1981. Although the number of rural development programs is small in terms of total broadcasting, care must be taken to interpret these results in the context in which the television service operates especially in terms of personnel qualified to produce this type of programming. Producers and directors at the television service have little experience or knowledge in the areas represented by rural development and may indeed be 'out of touch' with the rural reality in Niger (Source: Moctar Diallo, Director General, ORTN). Also, very little interministerial cooperation takes place where a qualified person from the Rural Development Ministry for example could be used as a resource person by Tele-Sahel (Source: Maikano Goumoundakoye, Director of the Forest Service, Ministry of Rural Development).

Nonetheless, the fact that at least some programming within the broadcast week is development oriented and in a local language understandable to the audience to which the program is intented, does show the television service in Niger is making at least an attempt to fill its intended role to facilitate rural development. The effectiveness of that intent could be the subject of further research in

Table 4

Breakdown of Tele-Sahel Programs with Content Specific to Facilitating Rural Development.

		Total		French		Local Languages	
		# in Sample	Mean/ Wk	# in Sample	Mean/ Wk	# in Sample	Mean/ Wk
Agriculture	Progs.	15	0.46	10	0.31	5	0.15
	Mins.	442	13.8	264	8.25	178	5.50
Forestry	Progs	9	0.28	5	0.35	4	0.12
	Mins.	183	5.70	100	3.10	83	2.60
Animal Husbandry	Progs.	3	0.09	2	0.06	1	0.03
	Mins.	42	1.30	25	0.78	17	0.53
Health	Progs.	10	0.31	7	0.21	3	0.09
	Mins.	283	8.80	193	6.00	90	2.80
Nutrition	Progs.	7	0.21	6	0.18	1	0.03
	Mins.	252	7.80	227	6.90	25	0.78
Land and Water Resources	Progs.	10	0.31	7	0.21	3	0.09
	Mins..	178	5.60	128	4.00	50	1.60
Other	Progs.	12	0.38	10	0.31	2	0.06
	Mins.	311	9.70	240	7.50	70	2.20
TOTAL	Progs.	66	2	47	1.5	19	0.60
	Mins.	1691	53	1177	37.0	513	16.00
Before Jan. 1981	Progs.	12	2	18	1.5	8	0.67
	Mins.	665	55	455	37.9	210	17.50
After Jan. 1981	Progs.	40	2	29	1.45	11	0.55
	Mins	1026	52	722	36.10	304	15.20

this area. However, it can be concluded that much more could possibly be done in this area of programming if Tele-Sahel is to more fully orient programming to the vast majority of rural Nigeriens.

Summary

Although Tele-Sahel has not literally met the policy of broadcasting locally produced programming at the 80% level of total broadcast minutes per week, it does broadcast locally produced programs at the 80% level in terms of total number of programs. While this might indicate success in orienting programming to Nigeriens, only 26% of total broadcast time is in a language understandable to the vast majority of Nigeriens. It may be concluded that despite efforts to orient programming to Nigeriens in terms of broadcasting locally produced programs, it is not clear whether that orientation is effective due to the majority of programming not being understandable to the majority of Nigeriens.

In terms of programming aimed at facilitating rural development, no change has occured in levels of programming since 1979. A mean of less than 2% of total broadcast time is devoted to programs which have content specific to facilitating rural development and are in a language understandable to most Nigeriens. This would imply that perhaps more could be done in order to more fully actualize the role of television in facilitating rural development in Niger.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Unlike many African nations, television in Niger has an extensive broadcasting network with television sets placed in rural communities in even some of the most remote parts of the country. Up-to-date equipment and facilities make possible the production of programs within the country and television in Niger relies on only a mean of 31% of minutes per week of imported programming to fill its broadcast schedule. Although the seemingly high percentage (69%) of locally produced programs does not meet, in terms of mean broadcast minutes per week, the standard of 80% set in official policy, the mean number of programs per week is 80% of total number of programs. While this may indicate fulfillment of intent to orient programs to Nigeriens, the fact that a mean of 74% of broadcast minutes per week is in a language (French) which is not understandable to approximately 85% of the population casts doubt on the effectiveness of that orientation.

It appears then, that Tele-Sahel's present role in the change process for development is only benign and indirect in that no specific measures have been taken to use television for development change purposes on a consistent basis. This is especially true in the area of rural development. Although television sets are being placed in rural communities which often do not have other amenities such as electricity or running water, programming with a rural development intent comprises less than a mean of 2% of total broadcasting time.

Television in Niger must, however, be seen in the light of the social, economic, political and cultural milieu of the country. The major role of television is to facilitate national unity and this role is fulfilled at least in intent by broadcasts in each of Niger's eight major and minor languages as well as through extensive programming of a national orientation. In terms of the roles of television in development goals and more specifically in rural development, factors of insufficient competent personnel, the conflict of traditional work ethics and the lack of inter-ministerial and inter-service cooperation with the television service are major reasons as to why more is not now produced.

An educated elite who are perhaps more in tune with the highly centralized bureaucarcy than with the realities and the needs of the rural populations of the country, shape and run the television service of Niger. Self-censorship means there is very little critical apppraisal of programming in general with the result that political considerations of advancing the offical line of the government color much of the programming.

Finally, very little is known about the television audience in Niger and the effects of television on Nigeriens. No audience surveys or other feedback research has been conducted and this would be an important next step in researching television in Niger. However, any attempts to measure effects of television on Nigeriens would have to be made in light of the intent and actuality of television programming which has been the main focus of this research.

Broadcasting in Africa has but on rare occasions responded to the needs of people (Ugbajah, 1980). In Niger however, while television

cannot be credited with meeting the needs of the people in terms of rural development programming to the majority of Nigeriens, at least an effort to orient programming to Nigeriens in terms of locally produced programs is being made. It remains questionable, however, whether the television service can serve both an elite power group and the relatively powerless majority at the same time. Notwithstanding the intentions of the Development Society to place decision-making power at the local level, the structure of that institution still leaves doubt as to whether participation can occur on the regional and national levels to resolve seeming conflicts between the elite and masses.

Given Niger's extensive television broadcasting system, actualizing intentions of facilitating the development needs of the country and especially facilitating rural development needs, remains a major challenge for the television service.

APPENDIX 1

List of Interviewees

The following are the Nigerien officials interviewed who have either positions at the television service or who tangentially have ties with the television service.

Director-General of ORTN
Director of Tele-Sahel
Director of Programming -- Tele-Sahel
Director of Production -- Tele-Sahel
Producer - Women's Magazine
Producer/Director - Young People's Magazine
Director of CFTI (Center for Training in Informtion Techniques)
Director of Studies - CFTI
Director of Information - Ministry of Information
Director Adjunct of INDRAP (National Institute for Pedagogic Research -- Former Director of Television Scolaire)
Director of Agriculture, Konni Region -- Ministry of Rural Development
Director of Water and Forest Resources -- Ministry of Rural Development
Director-Adjunct of Health, Niamey Region -- Ministry of Health and Social Services

APPENDIX 2

Questionnaire for Interviews with Nigerien Officials

The following questions were asked during the interviews with the Nigerien officials listed in Appendix 1. Questions were modified as was appropriate for each official.

1) - What are the goals, in your view, of the television service?
   - Are these goals being met?

2) - What is the intent of rural broadcasting?
   - Is television seen as a change agent for rural development in your view?
   - Do you think television can be used as such? How?
   - How can television be used more effectively to facilitate rural development?

3) - What are your contacts with the television service?
   - Do you request specific programs or types of programs? For what intent?
   - Are those request fulfilled? Is intent fulfilled? Are they effective programs? How are they effective?
   - How might better lines of communication be established to facilitate cooperation between yourself (Ministry/Service) and the television service?

4) - Do rural development agents in the field use television as a resource to use in conjunction with their work? Could they? How?
   How can rural television broadcasting be made more effective along these lines?

5) - Is there a need to change existing structures of the television service in order that it can serve its intent in facilitating rural development?
   If so, How?

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